

TEACHER CANDIDATE DISPOSITIONS

Preparing Effective Teachers:
Qualifying and Quantifying
Dispositions in a Pre-service Program

Overview

- ▣ Framing of the discussion (5 minutes)
- ▣ Examination of the appropriateness of assessing one's beliefs in a diverse society. (20 minutes)
- ▣ Debriefing of examination (15 minutes)
- ▣ The development of the instrument. (20 minutes)
- ▣ The findings of the study (20 minutes)
- ▣ Whole group discussion of findings and questions. (10 minutes)

Background to the Issue

- ▣ “... It is the business of a university to provide that atmosphere which is most conducive to speculation, experiment and creation. It is an atmosphere in which there prevail ‘the four essential freedoms’ of a university - to determine for itself on academic grounds who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be admitted to study.”
(*Sweezy v. New Hampshire*, 354 U.S. 234 (1957), <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=354&invol=234>)

Activity 1

- ▣ Individually identify 5 dispositions that define a good teacher (3 minutes)
 - On what are these dispositions based? (e.g., theory, research, conceptual framework, personal beliefs)
- ▣ What are the means that you would use to assess these dispositions? (3 minutes)
- ▣ What behaviors would you associate with each disposition? (4 minutes)

Scenario 1

- ▣ Pat is a mature student who works well with other students in your program and wants very much to become a teacher at his or her old school. However, when Pat does his first placement he notices that the old school has changed since he attended. The student population is now comprised predominantly of low SES African-American students and Pat has made it clear that there is a lack of desire to teach “those students”. Pat is presently asking for a change of placement. Should this impact Pat’s success in the program? If so, how and why?

Scenario 2

- ▣ Jean is doing well academically but you have noticed that he or she has little time for students who do not understand instructions the first time they are delivered. You have been monitoring this situation for the past three years and have had several discussions with Jean regarding your concerns. You have even attempted to counsel Jean out of the program but Jean likes the hours, the vacation time, and the pay and is unwilling to leave. Should Jean be dismissed? Why or why not?

Scenario 3

- ▣ Phil is a student with a 4.0 GPA. She is outspoken among her peers always takes the lead role when working in what are intended to be collaborative groups. Phil is very grade focused, before group work is submitted she acts as editor and will make changes to the work as she sees fit. Those who have questioned her on this practice have suffered her wrath as she will refuse to assist them in any way in the future. As she says, “It is pretty clear that my way is the right way to do things because, I have a 4.0.” When the first student placement reports came in you noticed that this practice was also something that occurred when Phil tutored. Should this practice impact her success in the program? If yes, how and why?

The Study

- ▣ Development of the instrument
 - Review of literature
 - Survey of faculty, superintendents, school principals, K-12 teachers, teacher candidates, and parents
 - Alignment with conceptual framework

Defining Dispositions

- ▣ Dispositions are defined as how values, commitments, and professional ethics manifest themselves in professional practice.
- ▣ Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice

Defining Good Dispositions Toward Teaching

- ❑ Self-assessment, peer-assessment, and critical examination of the efficacy of one's own practice are essential dispositions for all educational professionals (Feimann-Nemser, 1990).
- ❑ Educators must be reflective and meta-cognitive in order to encourage these practices in those they serve (Eby, Herrell, & Hicks, 2002; Henderson, 1996; Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1998).
- ❑ The goal of the professional educator is to transform his or her students, to inspire them to think, to feel, and to experience citizenship as active members in a democratic society (Dewey, 1916; Buber, 1965; Noddings, 2003).

Good Dispositions Continued

- ▣ According to McNeil (1971) the major indicators of teacher competency are found in personality, appearance, health, attitudes, and philosophy and not in pedagogical ability.
- ▣ Pedagogy that poses problems encourages reflective thinking and action based upon that thought (Miller, 1988, 1993).
- ▣ Unlike academic education, professional education prepares the individual to engage in effective practice in a manner that promotes not only informed judgment to act, but cognizance of consequence (Shulman, 2005).

Developing Indicators of Good Dispositions toward Teaching

Professional Commitment and Responsibility: The candidate demonstrates a commitment to the profession and adheres to the legal and ethical standards set forth by it.

The Candidate:

- ▣ Maintains appropriate confidentiality
- ▣ Demonstrates compliance with laws/regulations
- ▣ Demonstrates compliance with policies/standards
- ▣ Maintains professional appearance
- ▣ Is prepared for class or appointments
- ▣ Is punctual for class or appointments
- ▣ Demonstrates academic integrity

Developing Indicators of Good Dispositions toward Teaching

Professional Relationships:

The candidate develops, maintains, and models appropriate relationships within the workplace, community, and larger diverse society.

The Candidate:

- ▣ Demonstrates high expectations for others
- ▣ Demonstrates respect for the beliefs of others
- ▣ Demonstrates effective collaboration skills
- ▣ Demonstrates respect for cultural differences
- ▣ Demonstrates compassion for those experiencing difficulty
- ▣ Demonstrates patience during the learning process
- ▣ Demonstrates flexibility during the learning process

Developing Indicators of Good Dispositions toward Teaching

Critical Thinking and Reflective Practice: The candidate demonstrates a commitment to continuous development within the profession.

The Candidate:

- ▣ Demonstrates critical thinking in written or verbal form
- ▣ Addresses issues of concern professionally
- ▣ Responds positively to constructive criticism
- ▣ Actively seeks out new information
- ▣ Seeks help when needed
- ▣ Demonstrates personal progress
- ▣ Demonstrates reflective practice in written or verbal form

Instrument Validity

- ▣ Content Validity
 - Signed Student Commitment Sheet
 - Discussion at Orientation
 - Inclusion in Course Syllabi
 - Grounded in Conceptual Framework
 - Embedded in Coursework

- ▣ Concurrent Validity & Expert Opinion
 - Alignment with Field Evaluations (Pre-service Placements)

- ▣ Predictive Validity
 - Presently aligning program ratings with practicum ratings

Factor Analysis

- ▣ An exploratory factor analysis using a maximum likelihood extraction method was conducted and yielded a single factor ($X^2=5993.880$, $p<.001$) which the researchers have labeled the D factor.
- ▣ A Cronbach's Alpha was conducted and yielded a reliability of .987, for the 21 items.

Instrument Reliability

- ▣ Individual Grouping Ratings:
 - Faculty Scores collected on semester 1 students yielded a Cronbach's Alpha =.977 (n-546)
 - Student self -reported semester 1 scores yielded a Cronbach's Alpha =.909 (n=115)
 - Faculty Scores collected on Semester 2 students yielded a Cronbach's Alpha =.985 (n-261)
 - Student self -reported semester 2 scores yielded a Cronbach's Alpha =.850 (n=58)

Do teacher candidate ratings of their own dispositions change over time?

- ▣ A one-way ANOVA with a post hoc Bonferroni was conducted on semester 1 scores collected externally from full-time faculty and adjunct faculty and self-reported scores collected from the teacher candidates.
- ▣ These yielded a significant difference among groups $F(2,658)=10.119$ $p<.01$.
- ▣ Post hoc tests identified these differences as significant between full-time faculty and candidate self-reported scores and between adjunct faculty and candidate self-reported scores.
- ▣ No significant difference was found between the scores collected from full time and adjunct faculty

Do these self-reported scores align with external faculty ratings?

- ❑ A one-way ANOVA with a post hoc Bonferroni was conducted on semester 2 scores collected externally from full-time faculty and adjunct faculty and self-reported scores collected from the teacher candidates.
- ❑ The findings yielded no significant difference among any of the three groups $F(2,316)=1.292$ $p=.276$.
- ❑ A t test for independent samples was conducted on the self-reported scores for Groups 1 and 2 to determine whether or not there existed a significant difference in ratings. Levene's test for equality of variances was insignificant $F=.290$, $p=.591$ so equal variances could be assumed.
- ❑ According to the findings, there was no significant difference between the two sets of scores, $t(171)=1.189$, $p=.236$.

The Process

- ▣ At orientation, students are given two copies of the “Statement of Commitment to Dispositions”. They are to sign and return one copy to the chair of the department and retain one copy for their own records. The chair will keep the signed copy on file for the duration of the students’ program.

The Process Continued

- ▣ Instructors are provided with copies of the instructor form at the beginning of the year. Throughout the year they should keep a record of student behavior that they believe exemplifies deviation from what they would consider to be acceptable behavior of someone wishing to enter the teaching profession.
- ▣ At the end of the semester, all instructors are to complete and submit to the chair of the department the “Master Dispositions Faculty Form”.

The Process Continued

- ▣ The chair of the department will compile the data and sort it according to student number.
- ▣ The data are then recoded. Scores of 3, 4, and 5 are recoded to zero as these identify acceptable behaviors. Scores of 1 are recoded to equal -2 and scores of 2 are recoded to equal -1. Remember this is a default scale therefore, only students who score below an acceptable level will be flagged.

First Offence

- ▣ The data are totaled and sorted. Scores of zero are removed, leaving only scores below zero.
- ▣ The remaining data are then sorted according to student number. Students who receive two or more scores below the acceptable ranged are flagged

First Offence Continued

- ▣ If this is a first offence, the students will receive a letter from the chair of the department identifying the areas of concern. Students are then required to write a reflective paper that includes a plan of action to correct the behavior. A copy of this letter and paper will be placed in the student's file

Second Offence

- ▣ The student is required to meet with an adhoc committee comprised of the chair, one representative from the administration and one member from the student placement office to discuss the inappropriate behavior(s).
- ▣ The ad hoc committee will meet with the student to discuss options (i.e., whether he or she should be counseled out of the program or provided another opportunity to succeed)

Questions